

Bill Gates Sr. Trip to Thailand - November 29, 2010 - Highlights

Thailand had the honor of hosting Mr. William Howard Gates Sr., Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Mimi Gardner Gates., his wife. Mr. and Mrs. Gates visited our office and the Cabbages & Condoms Restaurant in Bangkok. They also met with villagers from the Village Development Partnership program, a women's silk-weaving group from Buriram Province, a garland-making group from the Grand Palace, and students from international and Thai schools (including our own Mechai Pattana School) involved in the Youth Philanthropy program.

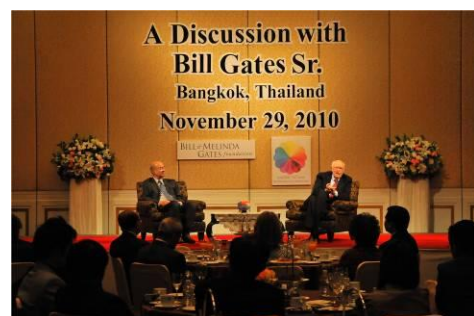


Following this greeting session, Mechai Viravaidya presented Mr. and Mrs. Gates with information on our initiatives in family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention, poverty eradication, education, youth philanthropy, and ongoing cooperation with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. We hosted the team for a luncheon at Cabbages & Condoms. Since the date was close to World AIDS day, Mr. and Mrs. Gates graciously accepted our small gift of condom caps, so that they could highlight the renewed effort towards HIV prevention worldwide.



In the afternoon, the Mechai Viravaidya Foundation organized a "High Tea Discussion and Q&A with Bill Gates Sr." at the Plaza Athenee Hotel, where he discussed with approximately 100 senior business and civil society leaders from Southeast Asia the importance of philanthropy and strategies to improve effectiveness in their giving. Some of the key quotes from Mr. Gates included:

- On having Bill Gates Jr. as a son "I've had more than one good thing happen to me in my life, but no one thing that exceeds my joy from what's happened to my son. It is really very exciting and satisfying.
- On how the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation was started: "I suggested I might be helpful in dealing with some of their philanthropic activities and requests...He and Melinda had actually developed a bit of negative feeling around town, because they were so busy working at their company that they were neglectful ...To my great surprise, about a week later he called and said 'I think I'll start a Foundation'"
- On Foundation efficiency: "You have to have a relationship where they (the grantees) inform you about things that are happening - particularly things that may not have been expected."



Following this discussion, Mr. and Mrs. Gates joined Khun Mechai and his wife, Thanphuying Putrie, for a dinner, in which former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun and prominent members of Thai society from the younger generation were in attendance. Following the trip, Dr. Melanie Walker, a Senior Program Officer at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, mentioned, "Bill Sr. spoke very, very highly of Khun Mechai and was super impressed at his lifetime commitment to the cause. He mentioned how Khun Mechai was the 'real deal' and passionate about the issues. He was super grateful. Mimi also learned quite a lot about the work. They both noticed the effort that went into putting the events together. It was all positive

and glowing."

We would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Gates for spending time with us along with the team at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for helping to arrange this once in a lifetime opportunity. We hope that Mr. Gates' actions and words were inspirational to Asian philanthropists looking to correct inequalities in society.

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